

HOW TO SIT FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPH

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HOW TO GET IT FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPH



IT was a long time ago—before the first chapter of Genesis, consequently before the creation of the world—so it seems to me now, yet I suppose *really* it was a little time later, when it was announced in my youthful hearing that an artist was coming to make my father's "profile." In these modern days no doubt it would be called a silhouette, but in those times it was simply and plainly denominated a "profile."

There was stir and fuss, talk and excitement about it I remember; a dressing up of my father in his

Sunday suit, many amateur efforts, by different members of the household, to achieve a bow-knot in his neckerchief worthy the admiring gaze of remote posterity. All this, together with a trembling though silent apprehensiveness on my part, made lasting impressions on my young mind.

This prospective operation, whatever it should prove, somehow became to me closely analogous to vaccination, to escape which I had only recently taken refuge, greatly to my mother's disgust, beneath the best bed, only however to be ignominiously dragged forth and compelled to submit.

The next scene my memory unfolds, which in point of time must have transpired about the 20th chapter of Genesis, presents my father sitting in the stiffest of shirt collars, in the most inflexible manner, on a straight-backed chair, quite speechless. The dreaded *artist* is standing beside him with all sorts of surveying instruments. He measures and notches, flourishes

and lays out like a busy landscape gardener. He scowls and squints, and doubles up over some mysterious white paper, but nevertheless looks common and ordinary. In that I was sorely grieved.

Centuries must have intervened between all this and the day the "profile" first arrested my awe-struck eyes, hanging high on the parlor wall, in a brightly painted pine frame.

To my mother it was a perpetual miracle. She never tired of feasting her devoted eyes upon its lineaments, or hugging the sentiment thereof, which arose like incense to her faithful heart. "Such a comfort as it will be to me in my old age," she used often to say.

To me, however, it was an incommunicable disappointment. By no stretch of the imagination could I conceive my father so wonderfully and fearfully made, with such a long sharp nose, such spider-leg eyelashes, and so astonishingly black and still.

I believed wholly in my mother's worship of it, admiring *her* as she admired the "profile," but had I ever been asked my opinion of it, which I never was, it would have been, in infantile dialect, "like our big black cat sitting the other side the window-pane when I was alone and afraid."

Silhouettes are no longer considered the acme of high art. The years and enterprise, industry and invention, and genius of man have, out of many gradations, evolved the almost complete reproduction of himself in modern Photography. The process of making a "profile" now is not so much a matter of compass and measurement, as it is a mental study. In these later days we have not only the *dead facial architecture*, but also all the round, full, abounding semblance of perfect life; needing, it seems, only the touch of some magic wand to awaken it to speech and motion.

It calls forth no surprise, therefore, to see the whole world availing itself of this speedy, quiet, faithful,

pleasant mode of perpetuating itself, before the fashion thereof shall have passed away. And yet it does call forth surprise to hear how easily and readily this same world thoughtlessly traduces the means that ministers.

Out of its heart, not ungrateful nor malicious but merely unthinking, babbling, come forth these oft-repeated and, to the photographer, uninspiring sayings:

Rash Individual. "Ask for my front teeth, but not for my picture."

Submissive, gentle Martyr. "Bless me! Isn't it a bore?"

Pretty School-girl, who dotes on it. "I can think of nothing in this wide, wide world so disagreeable as sitting for one's picture."

College Student, growing a waxed mustache. "Upon my soul, boys, the surgeon is a luxury to this unscionable photographer."

And the "rest of mankind" all indulge in these original and highly complimentary remarks.

It's a fashion. An epidemical protest. A chronic contagion. A choice introductory prelude. A mitigation of vanity. An escape-valve. A trick. A habit.

Then the absurdity of it is, each one supposes himself the inventor of them. He projects them with an air of patent-right-ism, as though sentiments like these had never before fallen on photographic ears.

Some there are who trust their own assertions to the extent of never going voluntarily to the studio; are inveigled, decoyed, regularly trapped by doting friends if gotten there at all. Speaking disinterestedly it is a most *fortunate* way of reaching this dreadful place. One would be almost sure of a particularly fine thing. But let me assure you, dear apprehensive friends, it is all sheer nonsense, all this talk and worry.

Throw off this popular incubus, and come to a sensible understanding with photography, and nothing is so admirable.

Because you will not sympathize with the art is why it seems mystical, arbitrary, and a most uncomfortable business.

Because you will not appreciate the principles and laws, which are immutable and not whimsical, you come to believe the rules and regulations of the sky-light a system of petty tyranny, in force simply to gratify the caprice of the Great Mogul who presides.

Consequently there has grown a clamorous necessity for an interpretation of the situation. A need for a medium between Photographer and Patron. And I, being a self-constituted medium, neither artist nor sitter, by prerogative have both sides the fence, in contributing these "pages."

Then let us plunge at once into the matter. Start with reliable data for preparation when visiting the atelier. To begin plumply, without circumlocution (supposing ourselves favored with your bending ear), it is expedient you should be in a *happy, obliging,*

believing state of existence when on photographic pictures bent, for several reasons.

Not the least is, though photographers are all martyrs, they are not all angels in disguise, and will rather expect help in practicing the virtues. Another reason is, if you have not these cardinal, moral excellencies with you, the want will tell in the picture.

Photography is magical for revealing secrets, digging into hidden things. It portrays with emphasis many things which pass the eye undetected. Unlike painting, its scope is not to concentrate the best characteristics, but only to catch fleeting expressions, to duplicate without extenuation, or flattery, that which is placed before the camera.

"I'm too miserable to think of it; just tired to death, fagged out; no more expression than a mummy. But if I don't sit to-day I never shall."

These were Mrs. Thrifty's remarks after buzzing about all day like a bumble-bee to match last year's

-dress, and after an exciting time chaffering with the milliner about a done-over straw, and a harassing hunt in quest of a cheaper tea-set, and after dovetailing things generally in a small pair of gaiters and two corns.

She threw off her bonnet and slicked up her hair, wondering "what he'd charge now." That was the main point, next to having it off her mind. It was down on the day's programme, so no use wet-blanketing her by discouraging words. She would hear to no excuses; business was business. Nevertheless what dreadful things were said of the proof. "She didn't look quite like *that*, she hoped. An old baked snivelled *igiot* scarecrow. Not any for me, if you please, Mr. Photographer."

Who was the victim? Echo answers, "Really now, that's too pointed."

It is not worth while, Mrs. Thrifty, to discourage yourself, as well as the artist, by sitting in such an

emergency. Your nerves in a tumult, your mind distracted, and face distorted. No mesmerism nor cajoling could soothe you so but that you would quake like a jelly, as soon as the test came and the camera was exposed. And if by any accident it *should* be quiet, what a rigid, forced, strait-laced, holding-on effect it gets. No ease, no composure, but an anxious, troubled, startled face, as though awakened suddenly from some stunning nightmare.

A few, perhaps, whose composition is granite, who eat like an ostrich, and sleep like a top, who have no nerves, but have unmistakable double chins, and go about losing their "things," and leaving portemonnaies on the counters, can sandwich a sitting between business and car-time, looking always and every time alike—a happy-go-easy, unchangeable fixity. Those persons are in the respected minority.

Gentlemen, 'tis true, are less susceptible to disturbing causes—don't fidget so much, can more easily

tone down and cool off from high pressure. Not that that makes them in the least superior, or more capable of voting—simply truisms. Yet, with all persons, it is desirable they should sit for pictures in that delectable condition of perfect serenity, docility, and with absolute leisure.

Come in a happy, obliging, believing mood, because it facilitates business and puts the artist in good humor. He must do his business his own way. If you compel him by refractory waywardness to *enforce* his demands, he becomes “a bear,” or “a boor,” right away, to your aggrieved imagination. Rarely he may possess that suavity and grace, which will enable him to execute his designs so courteously, you think after all you have had your own way like a spoiled child. But the chances are that this courtesy, repeated often, will prove too great a strain on the angel side of his nature. You might count upon it possibly in early morning, before his nerves (for he

has them) and his invention, his time and patience have been too severely taxed. When he comes fresh from his bath, and coffee, and sweet wifely adieux; before he discovers yesterday's work and yesterday's revenue all swept into the waste-basket, because of under-printing and over-printing, and muddy toning, and twisted mounting; before Miss Euphemia Rufflebustle insists upon sitting over, because one of her many flounces is just the least in the world on the wrong side for complete exhibition.

His placidity of temper is almost certain before these vexations occur. He will sugar-coat all his disagreeable pills. But after all these trials, and a hundred unmentioned others, one cannot reasonably expect a *man* to wear a disguise, or ignore his true feelings. You see, therefore, it is for *your* interest to come in an acquiescent mood, disposed to submit cheerfully to all his requirements, adding thereto *sweetness* if a woman.

Said Cornelia's mamma: "My dear, I have made an engagement at Mr. Endall's Studio for you this morning. But don't, Pet, consent to be squeezed into that head-rest; it will make you look so poky and ungraceful. Sheer nonsense that way of theirs to pinion one back into a vice; you can sit still just as well without it; so don't, Pet, allow it."

"O, mamma! what did you for? I just hate it. I'll be cross, and witched, and ugly. Got an awful cold, and a pimple." That was Cornelia's grateful and graceful rejoinder. And she didn't look assuring either, with her face in a snarl, and her foot in her lap, drawing together some astonishing holes in her stockings. But meek and weak mamma urged: "Do, Pet; you ought to make an effort in duty to your friends. What if you should die?"

Cornelia never answered questions, nor met points. She sustained conversation by running straight on her own track. So she said she "hated it" over again;

“never got anything half decent;” “Mr. Endall was a porcupine;” and, “it was perfectly horrid.”

We can easily predict, without recourse to witchcraft, the result of such preparation. Cornelia, doubtless, was a little below a seraph, in her sweet budding viciousness, accompanied by mamma’s judicious instructions; Mr. Endall we make no question in the valley of humiliation that he had ever tolerated the nuisance called head-rest, and would undoubtedly have been crushed had he known he was a porcupine.

The *accessories of mind* come with the sitter, and however ornate, or profuse in plenishings may be the skylight; however skilful the artist in his arrangement of them, or perfect the chemicals, or clear the light, or propitious the time, the sitter must always provide the other and higher order of embellishments—affability, sweetness, and tractableness.

Nothing is accomplished successfully without *faith*. You could be wearied with instances to prove it, only

you need not be, since it is too patent to your understanding.

If you do not believe wholly and heartily in photography, then bid farewell to every hope. Your unbelief will crop out in many unlovely ways, whatever the light and shade, tone and finish. A confidence felt and shown will beget inspiration in the artist. He works without embarrassment, and better. If you believe great things of him he will rise to your opinion, at least, endeavor to deserve it. Faith is extremely subtle, and will without much prating communicate itself.

Faith, and those before mentioned heart, head, and mind qualities are the real foundation of pictures, the only part that outlasts the fleeting changes of time.

It is greatly to be regretted that Cornelia and the rest of us do not give more attention to this inner and worthier source, and less to the draping of the form. Still, as drapery is a time-honored fashion, since Eve,

'tis well to know what is appropriate and what is objectionable beneath the skylight.

This sudden jump from ethics to material things—such as clothes and bows—is strictly necessary to fulfil the promise of these pages, otherwise we should leave you enwrapped altogether in those old-fashioned, but somewhat out of use, garments called faith, affability, and tractability, very especially the last mentioned.

When attiring for the skylight, do not disquiet yourself about colors, as almost every shade now in fashion can be well managed by the skilful artist. Indeed, there are but a few things decidedly objectionable in the matter of dress. Uppermost are solid *white* goods, like pique, or, extremely *thick* muslin; *plaids* in black and white, and prominent *stripes*.

The *thick* white affords no shadow and no perspective, makes a hard, unbroken, unvaried surface. It is only tolerated upon children—where detail of

dress is of less moment perhaps—because of its universal use, making it almost an arbitrary alternative, yet even with them objectionable. Still as the little ones by custom (most emphatically appropriate at all other times) are almost always dressed in white, the objection is compromised with under the skylight. But *plaids*, and broad *stripes*, and pronounced figures are without extenuation. These should always be avoided. Their effect is always so utterly unpicturesque as to destroy all the beauty and poetry of a photograph.

Trimmings and ornaments, well disposed, are very effective. They divert the eye from too close attention to features, many times conceal the lack of those charms all do not possess, but which all covet. Although it may sound paradoxical, very plain faces should avoid adopting any startling fashion that would attract attention to any one point. A quiet non-conspicuous style is the best, shunning all ex-

tremes like pompadour hair, three stories high, broad collars, astonishing bows, &c. Loose flowing garments, outside wraps of good design, lace shawls, and fans are useful in making up a picture. Ladies would do themselves a favor to remember them when visiting the studio, as they soften and modify many angular points. The hair should be dressed not too tightly; loose, fluffy hair admits light, and catches those coy middle tints so beautiful to the eye.

But the more simply children are dressed the better for artistic pictures. Youth and innocence bring their true and appropriate adorning; and if left to themselves will usually take the most becoming attitudes, because natural. A child clambers into the posing chair and faces half round, all tumbled and twisted, "mussed" and natural, the very ideal of childhood. Then officious mamma steps in and spoils it, squares and straightens, pulls out the dress, covering the beautifully dimpled knee, tugs away at the little arms and

shoes, till baby looks like a terrified, disjointed, wooden doll. The *artist*, indignant, tries his hand to undo the mischief; he manœuvres and scares the little one; in quirling up and distorting the pliant limbs, and placing everything proper and nice, he too makes a fizzle, and so the children are taken mostly in the most unnatural and constrained fashion.

No child left to itself ever sat straight up and down, plumply facing the camera, as we see them ten times out of twelve. That dull stupid idea originated in some wooden brain that had no right to preside over our magical instrument.

Half-grown boys especially require much letting alone. A free and easy talk with them upon a subject near their hearts will put them into position sooner and better than "much" laying on of hands. They scorn to be "fixed up." Everything "put on" is weak and unmanly. They wish to have accorded them independence of action. A few hints or suggestions,

wisely put, are sufficient, upon which they will readily act.

To maintain the equipoise of this subject, that too much weight may not fall at any time upon the photographer's side, let us return to the sitter, and consider that extremely difficult moment of "holding still" during (in technical parlance) "the exposure." In most instances, the more effort used to keep utterly quiet the surer the failure. Too taut nerves will stand the stress for a little, but they often rebel before the time is up. It is better to start with them under complete control. Settle yourself comfortably and easily, letting only one portion of the person rest *hard* against a support, either the head or back. Use the *will* more than the *muscle* for sustaining an even, composed attitude; and do not be diverted from your part of the business by any extraneous motion or confusion, for many times it is necessary to rotate screens, or change the lighting; or some injudicious

person may unceremoniously bounce in upon you. Here I'm reminded of most extraordinary behavior under dire circumstances. An artist while making a "mammoth," and therefore indulging in extra exposure, was unceremoniously startled toward the last by the unexpected caving in of his roof, in close proximity to the camera. The cap was clicked on in a flash, and turning to his sitter, who sat as unmoved and unconcerned as a statue, asked in blank astonishment, "Why didn't you jump?"

"That wasn't my business," coolly responded the man, gifted with uncommon concentration.

The views which illustrate our photographic literature, showing us the interior of skylights, generally represent the operator standing with his back turned upon the sitter, regarding a watch intently. Obviously he is attending to only one part of his business. In checking off the exact seconds, he neglects all the rest.

Now by facing his subject, noting the opportunities for improving the picture, by easy unimportant talk, tipping screens, moving top shades, and even though everything be rightly adjusted—by keeping up a little *show of business*—he shortens the time, and prevents the face from settling into that desponding hopeless expression which it is sure to do if left to an absolute vacuum of sound.

Of course this attention to the sitter should never be so personal as to become embarrassing. Every person will consent to whatever is necessary to perfect the picture. In almost all cases it is more agreeable than otherwise to be regarded, watched over, during the exposure. It relieves one from that sudden responsibility which falls like a pall on his unaccustomed shoulders.

All unconsciously he deports himself like a man with a motive. Interested, but not anxiously concerned, he brightens and sticks to it, without indicat-

ing effort. However brilliantly a lady may start off with a *smile*, particularly if gotten up to order, and not based upon an idea, she may be sure it will dwindle into the feeblest, silliest of smirks, if she keeps on smiling at a stupid mark, with no audience.

The majority of persons go to the studio without an idea of what they really are, or what they really want; depend upon the artist for every thought they have, every movement they make; he is expected also to bring each one up to the standard of his beautiful specimens at the entrance.

In possession of such impressible material he is responsible for, not only the characteristic posing, but further, to see that they do not depart from his studied labors during the sitting.

This can only be achieved by careful, constant attention, *indirectly* bestowed all through the exposure.

Differing from the matured woman, the grown man glories in his ripeness. Large and prominent features, positively defined noses, "deep seams of thought," matured expression; all these are becoming to the face masculine. The artist is seldom hampered by dodging wrinkles, or disguising any of the insignia of advancing years, excepting, always, the cases of widowers. Their vanities are truly painful.

Not by nature adepts in the art of rejuvenation, knowing nothing of the witchery of cosmetics, shut out by custom from the use of a hundred things resorted to by wily woman, they have an up hill time of it going back after their lost youth. In this trying emergency, their only resource and consolation is a Porcelain, on which it is impossible to make any widower look over thirty.

Mr. Baldtop's briskness in ambling up to the studio at sixty is quite refreshing, contrasted with his feeble step and slow at fifty-five, accompanied by his

now "dear lamented" wife. Paper pictures were good enough then, and needn't mind the extra expense of retouching. Wrinkles were there, a part of himself. His good loving Mary had seen them grow with his growth, and strengthen with his years, and yet her love was unchanged.

Ah! how different it all is now to be sure. His poor old white locks suddenly turned to a beautiful black, glossy and unctuous; his immaculate linen bejewelled with diamonds; his neat-fitting broadcloth "spic and span;" his glistening patent-leather boots quite undefiled; he is altogether so beguiling we wonder a community of rosy maidens of "sweet sixteen" do not fall a prey to his outward attractions at once.

"You do not do me justice," he critically complains, stealthily using his specs, and elevating his padded shoulders. "Too severe, altogether—too severe, sir. A very austere expression."

"But, my dear Mr. Baldtop, you certainly do not want a picture with a smirk, at *your* time of life?" blandly extenuates the artist anxious to please.

"*My* time of life!" shouts Mr. B. all ablaze. "What in thunder do you mean, sir? How old do you take me to be, sir?"

But man is only human after all, especially widowers; first cousin to poor vilified woman, joint inheritor of all her vanities. Perhaps it is wrong to thus expose him in his dotage and imbecility; to comment upon his revived appreciation of limber joints, slick beaver hats, and nobby suits. All well-regulated artists should strictly conceal such discoveries, together with those prettily tinted locket sizes, lying open to the uncharitable gaze of a gossiping public.

But we ramble; let us return to the text, costuming, &c., &c. In dress, too often the style of the person is ignored. Everything fashionable is adopted

regardless of its appropriateness. It is remarkable, indeed lamentable, how little individuality there is displayed in what we call "the taste" of people. Every woman dresses like all the rest, and men are only *fac-similes* of each other; all dress alike whatever adaptation they may have for the style. Gentlemen of small mould go into tights *en masse*, heedless of what they acknowledge to the world. A woman with nothing in particular to distinguish her from another, is pardonable for rushing into every freak of fashion; but if she have any distinction from the mass, it should be her pride to individualize it. The French modiste studies how best to adapt her finery to the wearer. The American milliner claps all on indiscriminately. Old and young, plain and pretty, plump and meagre, maid and mistress, come forth decked in duplications of her one idea. Fashion is a senseless autocrat; a worse tyrant to man than woman, because he has less leisure to modify her

edicts, and less instinct to help him do so, consequently he follows blindly or suffers uncomplainingly her inflictions.

Bessie Day was *distingue* in her own natural tumble-down hair and utter ignorance of Madam Demorest or Frank Leslie. She was large and strong, unique and impressive; elegant in her own way and individuality. But one evil moment she listened to meddling friends, who with cramped notions urged her to "fix up," "modernize," as she was going to sit for a picture. Perfectly unconscious of her beauty, and the power of her peculiar style, so entirely expressive of herself, she naturally enough distrusted her appearance when told to do so, and fell into snares. In the prescribed pink bows, modern gimps and gauds, chatelaine braids, cheap fancy ornaments, she became simply ordinary. The picture was a laughable caricature of her true self, buried beneath these trappings, suited to some waxy, passive, petite body, whose only distinction

from her neighbors consisted in five ruffles on her bottom skirt instead of three. Happily it was not irremediable. Bessie's instincts of the eternal fitness of things saw the blunder. Divesting herself of this strange, unsuited plumage, she again visited the astonished artist, who had been woefully puzzled how to pose this contradictory mixture. In her own chosen attire, innocent of bustle, pannier, insanity of flounces, contortions of flummery, her hair in classic coil, nature untrammelled, she was a success.

The artist is often baffled in his study of the subject by this insane multiplicity and incongruity of things. Dress being considered the exponent of the wearer he bases his proceedings accordingly. To criticize the dress, except in the most covert apologetical manner, is sure to wound the vanity. The very soul of a woman is sometimes smothered, and extremest awkwardness forced upon childhood, as for instance: A little orphan girl, with soft dark eyes, sweet rosy

cheeks, and a wealth of wavy hair, was tricked out by some prim aunties, who had their own notions of the importance of the occasion, in all manner of grown up gewgaws, and taken to the studio.

The artist, nonplussed, struggled to harmonize these two extremes—this old absurdity with the young beauty. But with all his pains he got a most wearisomely demure inconsistency; he could neither make the child old becomingly, nor young compatibly.

This is not talk *against* dress, but of its artistic use and abuse. There is more danger of falling into the extreme of underdress than overdress. Only a few there are who “unadorned are the adorndest.” The idea we wish to *spread* is that we strive to adapt the outward showing to the inward real. Suitable attention to the toilette is of utmost importance. We lose respect for those persons who disregard it. Where it is not instinct to choose rightly, it should be made a study. Every person can cultivate an appreciation

of effects in colors and shapes who is so unfortunate as to be born without it. Even our friend, Horace Greeley, knows well, without doubt, the influence of his independence of style—the worth to him of that historic white hat. How it would demolish his notoriety to go into Broadway fashions. Eccentric in brain, consistently it follows in dress. But eccentricity affected is, of all things, revolting—as witness ye Bloomers; no woman was yet born to such disfigurement as the hybrid mixture of trowsers and ribbons, boots and veils. It suggests a mongrel sex, and the proprietor of such insane toggery richly deserves the elegant sobriquet of “He, She or It.”

And the woman, too, who twists up her hair so tightly it strains open her eyes, puts on a color that matches her faded complexion, disfigures her extremities with misfits, denounces the mirror, and shuns the milliner, is made of coarse material. We do not allow flowers to become entangled with weeds; that

would be sacrilegious also. No one of us can afford to neglect the gifts vouchsafed us. Like the bewildering vine and riotous flowers, we must weed and prune, train and direct, if we hope to realize the perfection of our possibilities.

Said old Mrs. Livercomplaint: "Now what's the use; we're all dust of the earth, and grass of the meadow; all must fade and die; time spent prinking is lost to the soul; these vile bodies must return to the mould, and be devoured by wriggling worms. Betsy Jane, do hang up that looking-glass, and put some more water in them air beans."

We say grace over bacon and potatoes, why not return thanks for beautiful women? That is not original, however; some voluptuous heathen perpetrated the query. Heretically, however, my devotions jump with his. Why not express gratitude for that which feeds the soul and fancy as well as the stomach? Why not lift the voice in thanksgiving for the bright

skies, the green verdure of earth, the splendor of the sweet flowers, for the dancing wave, for moonlight, and starlight, for all beauty—even beautiful women—these at least do not promote dyspepsia. How often have my risibles been restrained while listening to the lengthy “thanks” of some rotund, unctuous believer in pious formula, for a table groaning with all manner of indigestion.

This same devout individual passes serenely among the miracles of nature. The pure white lily, the glistering sunshine, the exhaling fragrance of the opening rose, the blue ether arched above him, touch not his soul. In stolid indifference he half slumbers away the sweet morning hours, and is only aroused to think of the goodness of his Creator when seated over the fumes of a slaughtered lamb or a young pig. But, mercy. Here we are off the track again. Let us back to our “muttons.” She was ironing—was Miss Nipandtuck—doing up her best white dress of

bishop's lawn. There were rows upon rows of ruffles, and tantalizing little puffs between, and they would stick to the flat-iron.

Anybody short of Miss Nip or Saintess Bridget, would have surrendered to the difficulty.

Such a scorching and smutting, sticking and sputtering time as Nip and the old iron had of it. And then when it was finished, all this perversity conquered, and Dan Whitepants took *it* and *her* to the 4th on purpose for their united photographs, and Mr. Stick-at-his-business refused to "take 'em," because white wasn't the thing, but told Nip to go right home and put on her *blue*, wasn't she dumbfounded?

Blue? Yes! Miss Nip; times aren't now as they use to was. Certainly, put on your blue. With your fair hair and brilliant complexion, nothing would be so charming. Soft and shadowy, with no black, harsh patches will be the effect. Mr. Stick, &c., will direct your cerulean eyes downward, or perchance turn them

from the light; he will throw intense illumination between you and the background, heighten it still more over your rippling curls. Then while you sit, Nip, please think of Dan. Let the eye shine, and coquettish curve of the lip come, as they do when he proudly pours into your drinking ears the poetical sentiment, "Nip, you are a trump."

Nothing gives such an interest to the picture, and satisfaction to the artist, as to have it see something, and on the very "vertex" of speaking. Put your whole soul in lip and eye, and hold them firm without one wink of a relapse. An intelligent, bright, unwavering gaze is quite another thing from a fixed, vacant stare; otherwise, two insensate orbs could as well be inked in.

And you must put a *June rose*, made of muslin, in your hair, taking off the ribbon. There is no poetry to speak of in a head bound up with strings. Useful and piquant enough over the ironing-board, but not

graceful in a statue or picture. Also, Nippy, you must draw on your tinted gloves, unless you are so fortunate as to possess the daintiest digits.

No! statues do not wear gloves, neither are they decked out in regularly shaped dresses, after the most approved Parisian fashions. We must maintain beautiful consistency. Gloves are recommended because they give an air and finish, and are easily and prettily posed; besides, they cover, on most hands, those distending veins which are ever exaggerated by the camera. It is vanity with all of us to want *small* hands, a little weakness photography does not flatter. Being nearer the camera than the face, they necessarily are proportionably larger; therefore extra exertion is requisite to pose them and to dispose of them. The prettiest picture may be spoiled by inattention to this point. Probably more time is spent, by an appreciative artist, on cramped, awkward, unmanageable hands than on any other part of the posing.

A well-shaped, wholesome, respectable hand, to the eye, often becomes the veriest clump in the camera by bad lighting and wrong posing, or rather no posing at all.

The little jewelled fingers on which the eyes have often rested with extremest satisfaction, noting the waxen fairness, the supple grace, the exquisite mould, become many times the sorest disappointment. Black, magnified, real *fists*, and a failure, because forsooth of two errors—the artist had not taste nor skill to overcome the difficulties, or they were altogether ignored.

The old idea, so damagingly prevalent, was to spread the hands out, make the most of them, one dropped over a table, the other broadside front on the lap.

How the art-loving soul was tortured by those stereotyped monstrosities. But the “new departure” promises better things; it believes more in suggestions, is more æsthetic, daintier, more rounded in art.

The sitter is not plunged down, himself idealess, the artist (?) ditto, for accident and the camera to have it all their own way. Now, in most instances, the sitter is made to develop some plan or purpose; he is not told to look straight into vacuity and not wink, but rather to conjure before him some pleasing object, which will hold his features in unrelaxed animation.

O yes, we have fallen on better times. Photography has taken long strides; is now, most emphatically, on the jump. No photographer can afford now-a-days to sit and tweedle his thumbs, tilted back on two legs waiting for the next customer. The times compel him to be up and at it; compel him to think, to contrive, experiment, work, or fall irretrievably backward. With our "Gems from Germany," our wonders from Paris, our achievements of America, all teeming with excellence, all beaming in every quarter, no man can hug his old-time theories and practice, and not ultimately die of stagnation, if not for want of bread.

“What! not going to the studio again, Mrs. Bland! I thought you had a dozen proofs already?”

“And so I have, dear John, yet not one that pleases me. Haven’t I paid my money, dear, and now don’t I wish to be suited. Such a bother as it is too; sat eight times for cards, and four times for Victorias, and every one of them has that dreadfully, forlorn, old look about the eyes, a century beyond my real age; if it isn’t a success to-day, I shall ask to have the money refunded and give it up.”

Poor, dear, innocent Mrs. Bland; she believes herself the injured party; she is quite oblivious of the fact that three times her money has been already sunken in untiring effort to accommodate her mistaken ideas of how she looks.

She is wholly unconscious of the number of discouraged, disheartened customers who have retreated down the stairs, with their dollars, because of her prolonged visits and seemingly endless sittings. Nor

is she aware how patient, polite, and tender of her sensibilities has been the overtaxed artist, who stood at his post like a soldier at his guns, and couldn't say "Now really, Mrs. Bland, wrinkles is wrinkles and age will tell," to relieve his feelings a little?

There are two sides to picture-making. The inconvenience and annoyance of repeated sittings fall quite as ^{*}disastrously upon the photographer as his patron. Financially he is much the greater sufferer. Consequently this trial of "sitting over" should be borne with mutual charity and forbearance.

I have quite an intimate acquaintance with one photographer who is decidedly popular. He has put me in possession of a really surprising amount of information, concerning human nature, especially woman nature. When this photographer's banks overflow with tribulation, and he comes to me to scold, and pass judgment on his unsuspecting victims, I with true womanly tact laugh, or condole in just the

right places, he never once suspecting but that my whole heart is given over to his views of things. Most adroitly is he managed, yet never could he believe such a thing possible. When I see that by a legion of little annoyances my good friend has lost his *wonderful* equanimity of temper, and is ready in his wrath to tear up the chimney, or belabor the poor patient printers, I just take up the cudgels strongly, in his behalf; not a crumb of toleration, nor a morsel of excuse, is accorded anybody—guilty or not guilty.

This sweeping, wholesale denunciation generally arouses his slumbering sense of justice, to the extent of his turning suddenly against me, and complacently informing me, "I always did go upon extremes. He is sure he never intended I should get the idea all his customers were Feejees." So impressed is he by the wrong done his sitters, that he is positive, now he thinks of it, that the flurried-looking woman over in the corner, with so much starch in her dress—she who

has anticipated this day, and the novelty of "sitting for a picture" for months, but whom my friend has persistently discouraged for three hours, because she was so illy gotten up—yes, is positive she will make a "good thing" with painstaking and pulling her hair out sort of loose, over the top.

And that sad-faced mother too, whose distress quite touched my heart as she tearfully bundled up the "terrible" infant ready for departure, was told, in persuading tones, to "hold on;" perhaps he would try one more. "A pity not to get him—such a bright up-and-a-coming little fellow."

The corners of my mouth would pull and twitch; still I insisted with dolorous voice, "I would *not* indulge her in so hopeless a cause. The woman could never appreciate the fatigue, and chemicals, and stuff; beside, she only wanted 'a very few.' And yet it *was* a remarkable baby—couldn't I run up and shake the rattle, or help to bamboozle it?"

Nothing like knowing which strings to pull when manipulating a *man*. A little finessing around the corners is worth a mile of straightforward butting against conceits. The surest way to conquer him is to pat, and smooth, and humor. Especially pat, smooth, and humor that never-to-be-trifled-with portion of masculinity called photographers.

This bit of sagacious advice to the guileless public, who with blind infatuation persist in believing the fraternity made chiefly of india-rubber and maple sugar, is given wholly in their interest. By observing this recipe when dealing with them, although somewhat obnoxious, perhaps, to a perfectly ingenuous disposition, or somewhat humiliating to a proud, lofty, dignified spirit, still you but "stoop to conquer."

ABOUT PROOFS.

Proofs, as almost every one knows, are simply unfixed and unfinished impressions or prints from the

negative, to submit to the sitter for choice or approbation; not, of course, permanent, but quickly fading and spoiling upon exposure to light.

Before the recent improvement in photography, technically called *retouching*, a proof bore a tolerably correct resemblance to the finished picture, and was consequently useful and satisfactory to submit as a specimen. But since the introduction of the new method of working over the negative, a proof is of little worth; indeed it has become a source of trial.

Briefly we will try to explain some of the causes of this. In the first place the negative is made quite differently from the old way; it is made *thinner*, and thus magnifies greatly all imperfections; also, it is made with direct reference to the retouching process, the artist understanding how materially that will change his handling. If the face have lines, freckles, marks, or any disfigurement, from the extreme thinness of the negative, which is made in this manner to

secure the utmost detail, these will become much more prominent than is at all natural.

Another reason why proofs are of little value, is, often the artist gives a view of the face, which but for the subsequent softening and rounding influence of the pencil would be altogether objectionable.

It is, therefore, hardly possible to depend upon a proof before the final finish is made. And yet the process of retouching is so expensive it cannot be entered upon on uncertainties.

The question then arises, How are we to compromise with this difficulty?

There are but two ways: Either the sitter must acquaint himself with the business sufficiently to understandingly make allowance between the rough print and the finished picture, so that he can see wherein the pencil shall alter, obliterate, modify, and extenuate; where asperities of outline shall be modelled into beauty; where a heightened light shall deepen

a necessary shadow, &c., &c.; or, he must yield the whole responsibility to the supposed competent good judgment and taste of the artist. It has really gotten to be a work of supererogation to show a proof now-a-days; not one in a hundred approves of the sample. And even though there be a person in attendance who is capable of elucidating the intended changes, the chances are that the explanations will be unheeded, or half believed, or entirely unappreciated; the result being, they cannot have "such things," they will "sit over."

To obviate this trouble somewhat, the sitter should bear in mind that a proof from a negative that is to be retouched, is many degrees inferior to one made from a negative not to undergo this improvement; and also that this retouching is resorted to expressly to remove imperfections, to lessen and modify that which is offending to the eye, and to perfect the picture without trenching upon the fidelity to a natural likeness.